

What is claimed:

1. An apparatus for accessing a site within a body, comprising:  
a cannula having a proximal end, a distal end, and a first lumen extending therebetween; and

5 a first elongate member having a distal end configured for insertion into the first lumen, wherein the distal end of the first elongate member is attachable to and releasable from the distal end of the cannula.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the cannula has a cross sectional  
10 dimension that is approximately between 0.7 mm to 10.0 mm.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the distal end of the first elongate member comprises a screw.

15 4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the distal end of the first elongate member comprises a snap-fit connector.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the distal end of the first elongate member comprises a frictional connector.

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6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the distal end of the first elongate member comprises an expandable member having an expanded configuration

and a collapsed configuration, the expandable member securing the distal end of the first elongate member to the distal end of the cannula when in the expanded configuration.

5     7.     The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the expandable member comprises a balloon.

8.     The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the expandable member comprises a bent wire.

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9.     The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the distal end of the first elongate member comprises a locking mechanism made from an elastic material.

10.    The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the elongate member is a part of a  
15    steering mechanism for steering the distal end of the cannula.

11.    The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a handle secured to a proximal end of the elongate member, the handle having a tensioning device for applying a tension to the elongate member.

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12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the elongate member has one or more openings along its length to thereby provide a desired flexural or torsional stiffness to the elongate member.

5 13. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the elongate member is a stiffening element adapted for increasing a stiffness of the cannula.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the stiffness comprises a flexural stiffness.

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15. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the stiffness comprises a torsional stiffness.

16. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the cannula comprises an elastic wall  
15 that deflects in response to fluid pressure.

17. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the cannula further includes a second lumen extending between the distal end and the proximal end of the cannula, and the apparatus further comprises a second elongate member having a distal  
20 end configured for insertion into the second lumen.

18. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the cannula further includes a working channel extending between the distal end and the proximal end of the cannula.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the working channel has a cross  
5 sectional dimension sized to house an object selected from the group consisting of at least a portion of a guidewire, at least a portion of an ablation device, at least a portion of an imaging device, at least a portion of a fiber optic, a therapeutic element, a diagnostic element, and an implant.

10 20. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a radio-opaque marker secured to the distal end of the cannula.

21. A method for accessing a site within a body, comprising:  
inserting a distal end of a first elongate member into a first lumen of a  
15 cannula;  
detachably attaching the distal end of the first elongate member to the cannula; and  
steering a distal end of the cannula to a desired site in the body using the first elongate member.

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22. The method of claim 21, further comprising detaching the distal end of the first elongate member from the cannula, and removing the distal end of the first elongate member from the first lumen of the cannula.

5 23. The method of claim 22, further comprising delivering an object using the first lumen after the distal end of the first elongate member has been removed.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the object is selected from the group consisting of at least a portion of a guidewire, at least a portion of an ablation  
10 device, at least a portion of an imaging device, a fiber optic, a therapeutic element, a diagnostic element, and an implant.

25. The method of claim 21, wherein the cannula has a second lumen extending between ends of the cannula, and the method further comprising  
15 delivering an object using the second lumen.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the object is selected from the group consisting of at least a portion of a guidewire, at least a portion of an ablation device, at least a portion of an imaging device, a fiber optic, a therapeutic  
20 element, a diagnostic element, and an implant.

27. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

inserting a distal end of a second elongate member into a second lumen  
of the cannula; and

attaching the distal end of the second elongate member to the cannula.

5 28. A method for accessing a site within a body, comprising:

inserting a distal end of a first elongate member into a first lumen of a  
cannula to thereby stiffen at least a portion of the cannula;

detachably attaching the distal end of the first elongate member to the  
cannula; and

10 manipulating a proximal end of the cannula to thereby place a distal end of  
the cannula at a desired position.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising detaching the distal end of the  
first elongate member from the cannula, and removing the distal end of the first  
15 elongate member from the first lumen of the cannula.

30. The method of claim 29, further comprising delivering an object using the  
first lumen after the distal end of the first elongate member has been removed.

20 31. The method of claim 30, wherein the object is selected from the group  
consisting of at least a portion of a guidewire, at least a portion of an ablation

device, at least a portion of an imaging device, a fiber optic, a therapeutic element, a diagnostic element, and an implant.

32. The method of claim 28, wherein the cannula has a second lumen  
5 extending between ends of the cannula, and the method further comprising delivering an object using the second lumen.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the object is selected from the group consisting of at least a portion of a guidewire, at least a portion of an ablation  
10 device, at least a portion of an imaging device, a fiber optic, a therapeutic element, a diagnostic element, and an implant.

34. The method of claim 28, further comprising:  
inserting a distal end of a second elongate member into a second lumen  
15 of the cannula; and  
attaching the distal end of the second elongate member to the cannula.

35. A method for accessing a site within a body, comprising:  
inserting a wire having a bent configuration into a lumen of a cannula, the  
20 cannula having a distal end, a first portion at the distal end, and a second portion proximal to the first portion, wherein the second portion is relatively stiffer than the first portion; and

manipulating the wire by sliding a distal end of the wire either distally or proximally relative to the cannula to thereby steer the distal end of the cannula.

36. The method of claim 35, further comprising removing the wire from the  
5 lumen of the cannula after the distal end of the cannula has been desirably positioned.

37. The method of claim 36, further comprising using the lumen of the cannula to deliver a tool, an instrument, a therapeutic element, a diagnostic element, or  
10 fluid, from a proximal end of the cannula to the distal end of the cannula.